

September 17, 2009

How do you build a community of practice in STEM education? STARBASE Minnesota, along with Humphrey Institute of the University of Minnesota, Minnesota High Tech Association, and the Institute of Technology Alumni Society led a half-day meeting on September 17, 2009 for over 40 Minnesota STEM practitioners, policy makers, and business leaders—all with a vested interest in STEM education to determine how to work together to answer that question and advance STEM in Minnesota.



Susan Lavrakas, formerly of White Bear Lake, MN and Director of Government Affairs for BAE Systems in Arlington, Virginia kicked off the meeting with insights and lessons learned from her work with National Defense

Industrial Association (NDIA) and Aerospace Industries Association (AIA) in building coalitions in STEM. Small work groups were then formed to develop and prioritize needs in STEM education and to develop an action plan for how this group of distinct and primarily independent STEM organizations will collaborate to form a comprehensive fabric of services and “buzz” around STEM in the community, state and nation.

The meeting, called Building A Community of Practice in STEM was the first of its kind in Minnesota bringing 36 STEM organizations together who committed to improving awareness, access and opportunities for students, K-16 and beyond in science, technology, engineering and math. In addition to STARBASE Minnesota, among the organizations represented were: SciMath MN, Bakken Museum, High Tech Kids, Society of Women Engineers, IT Collaborative, MN Center for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence, Minnesota High Tech Association, Wired 2020, The MN Children’s Museum, First Robotics, the Science Museum of MN, the Works Museum, MN Department of Education, MNSCU, MN Planetarium as well as State Senator Kathy Saltzman, Representative Phyllis Kahn and Ernie Gonzales from the Department of Defense Secretary for Reserve Affairs, and others. The meeting was held at the Humphrey Institute and sponsored by NDIA.

